FUNERAL SERVICES

OF

Washington Righter,

COLUMBIA, PA.,

Sept. 25th, 1879.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

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FUNERAL SERVICES.

THE funeral services of Washington Righter were conducted at the family residence in Columbia, Pa., Sept. 25, 1879, in presence of a large concourse of people.

Rev. Henry Wheeler, of the M. E. Church, pastor of the deceased, announced the 388h hymn,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,"

and offered prayer. The 90th Psalm was read by Rev. Mr. Gerhard, of the Reformed Church, and Rev. Mr. Mc'Coy, of the Presbyterian Church, read 1 Cor., 15th chapter. Rev. Henry Wheeler then spoke as follows:

In the lesson read are these words: "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Ps. xc. 10.

The death of the aged comes in the natural course of events, and one by one the pillars that have long stood as the supports of our business and social life, fall by the hand of death. If they are spared by the Providence of God from the ravages of disease, time itself by slow natural

decay will sap the foundations of the physical structure, and death ensues.

But every life has its own individuality, and from the proper standpoint can be distinguished from the common mass. Every soul attains to a separate and distinct character, and each man's life makes a distinct impression upon his own age. As in the multitudinous and ever-changing forms of matter no atom is lost, so in the varied and ever-changing phases of human character, no influence gained or impression made is lost or obliterated, but must stand indelibly impressed upon the records of time, as essential parts of the history of human souls.

Washington Righter was born December 9th, 1799, and died September 22, 1879, aged 79 years, 9 months and 13 days.

A few items must be added to these, to fill out the calendar history of our deceased brother. He was married October 8th, 1833, to Elizabeth M. Cottrell, who has watched with so much solicitude over his ebbing life for months past, and is now left a lonely survivor to follow him to his grave.

He has left two sons and two daughters, whose affection has been manifested in untiring devotion to the happiness of their father during the months of his sickness. An infant son died many years ago, and it is a remarkable fact that for upwards of forty years death had not crossed their threshold.

Brother Righter was converted to God in West Chester, Pa., and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, fifty-three years ago. This was the most important event in his life, and had more to do with molding his character than everything else combined. It is a great event in any man's life —the change from nature to grace, from the power of Satan unto God, when the affections are elevated and the glory of God becomes the supreme object in life. This change was sought and obtained by our friend in his early manhood.

What were the Characteristics of His Life?

We may be able to form some estimate of this now. His life flowed gently and evenly along, and on Monday last reached a peaceful end. It was like some gently-flowing river, growing deeper and more majestic, but more still and silent, as it enters its ocean home.

What elements must we aggregate in a human life to make that life a success? The answer to this will differ according to the stand-point we occupy. Some will say the acquisition of wealth. But this is the lowest standard of success. How many make a sad and fatal mistake in life by putting that first which should be last, and that last which should be first. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness." In the acquisition of wealth, our brother's life was a success.

Wealth is a blessing from God, when the means of its acquisition are legitimate, and it is made to subserve the highest interests of man. Other elements are these: To rear a family that will perpetuate our name with honor and respect; to obtain the honor and respect of our fellow citizens; above all, to honor God by our talent and substance, in our daily life; to obtain peace and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ our Lord; to be brought down to the grave in a good old age, full of years, satisfied with life, having a hope blooming with immortality and life; to die in the midst of your family amid tears of sincere sorrow; to be borne to the grave by your friends and neighbors, with naught following your memory but the respect and affection of mankind—do these constitute life a success? Then was our brother's life successful.

What were the Elements that Led to Success?

Business integrity. He has been among the most successful business men of Columbia. But few men have been so long known in business circles as he, having commenced here in 1830. His operations were characterized by firmness, honesty, and uprightness. He was diligent, prudent, foreseeing and economical.

Christian character. As a Christian his name was upon the records of the Church for upwards

of fifty-three years. He held an official relation to the M. E. Church for many years, as Steward and Trustee, and in these relations was a wise counselor, a strong pillar, and generous supporter of the Church and her institutions. He was exemplary in conduct, prompt in Christian duty, and punctual at the means of grace. One who was his class-leader for thirty years says, "He was a constant attendant upon his class until disabled by age and infirmity. His experience was good, he witnessed a good confession, loved his Church, had an earnest longing for greater purity, and served God from principle rather than impulse."

But it is in the inner circles of the home,

As Husband and Father,

that we must look for his highest excellences. Here his strong affection manifested itself. His desire was for the happiness of all, and his efforts tended to this end. He was unselfish, kind and considerate, and as gentle as a child. He inculcated, by precept and example, love for all men, and where any dispute existed he labored for peace.

During his long sickness he manifested one of the most grateful and loving dispositions I ever saw. Love and gratitude were heard in every word. He thought all who came near him were so kind and thoughtful of his happiness, and

thus expressed himself on all occasions. Upon his death bed his religious character shone out bright and serene. He was perfectly resigned to the will of God. I never heard one word that indicated other than this, during my pastoral visits. He resigned himself into the hands of God with the same confidence and simplicity with which a child reclines upon the bosom of its mother. Shortly before his death he said to me, "I have trusted in God for more than fifty years, I can trust him the balance of my life." Two weeks ago we administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to him and his weeping family. It was a blessed season of grace. A subdued and hallowed feeling pervaded every heart, and we felt that God was, indeed, present with us. We thought, surely,

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond this common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven."

He thought on one occasion, about four weeks before his death, that he saw his father, who died when he was twelve years of age, standing by his bedside and looking compassionately upon him. He cried after him, "My father! my father!" Beyond question, there is sympathy between the departed and departing. It may have been a dream, it may have been a reality; in either case, full of comfort to him, and indicative of the tend-

ency of his thoughts. The last visit I made him while consciousness remained, and only two days before his death, he responded to petitions offered in his behalf, "God grant it, God grant it, Amen." I remarked that God would soon say, "It is enough, come up higher," he replied, "My place is up higher, my place is up higher."

"How happy every child of grace,
Who knows his sins forgiven!
This earth, he cries, is not my place;
I seek my place in heaven;
A country far from mortal sight,
Yet, O, by faith I see;
The land of rest, the saints' delight,—
The heaven prepared for me."

Thus died our brother and friend, "in a good old age, full of years and is gathered unto his fathers in peace."

What are the Lessons of His Life?

Industry, integrity, and piety, will win the esteem of both God and man.

An entire trust in the merits of the Son of God as the Saviour of the soul, will give the sublimest satisfaction in the hour of death; and one hour of such satisfaction, if it be the last hour of life, is worth a lifetime of effort to obtain. But for our full satisfaction and comfort, when death has desolated our home, we want something more

authoritative than our own reflections or deductions from a good man's life and death.

What has Christ Taught Relevant to this Hour?

Of immortality. We watched the light of the eye go out, and with it that which had been the joy and staff of the household for more than half a century. We followed him to the river's brink, but could go no farther. One moment he was with us, the next was gone forever—the transition so easy and yet so great, the loved one so near and yet so far away. Does not the question arise, What lies beyond? The answer comes from the inspired word, "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccl. xii. 7. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. ii. 10.

Of the resurrection. To-day we lay the body down, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." How often does the question of Job recur to the most pious and thoughtful mind, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Hark! The answer comes down over eighteen centuries of time from the lips of Jesus, as fresh, as full, and powerful as ever, "I am the resurrection and the life."

These teachings are above the plane of human thought; they are divine, and come to us with divine authority. We receive, believe and trust them, and they comfort us.

In the death of Washington Righter, we have lost a kind and genial neighbor, and an honored citizen. The Church has lost an exemplary member, the family an indulgent and loving husband and father. We commend all the bereaved ones to the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus, whose promises are always sure, and whose mercies are unfailing.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."